

WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD NORTH COAST REGION

MONTHLY REPORT TO THE BOARD

March 2001

MEETING WITH SENATOR WESLEY CHESBRO

On February 16, 2001, the Executive Officer of the Regional Water Board met with Senator Wesley Chesbro to discuss the tetrachloroethylene (PCE) groundwater contamination in the Clover Drive/West College neighborhood in Santa Rosa. In particular, Senator Chesbro was interested in discussing:

- Use of the \$740,000 of State Water Resources Control Board Cleanup and Abatement Account funds;
- Nature and source of the contamination, and the short and long-term concerns for the neighborhood;
- The prospects for getting the area cleaned up, costs of cleanup, identification of responsible parties, and need for additional funds.

Senator Chesbro expressed his belief that the Regional Water Board responded in an appropriate manner to the contamination emergency and that he is willing to assist us any way he can to resolve this issue (discussed in more detail in the next section).

CLEANUPS AND SPECIAL INVESTIGATION DIVISION

West College Avenue at Clover Drive, Santa Rosa

[Staff contact: Mark Bartson]

Regional Water Board staff has expanded work in the investigation and response to the contamination of groundwater with tetrachloroethylene (PCE) in the area of West College Avenue and Clover Drive in Santa Rosa. This additional work is made possible by the receipt of cleanup and abatement account funds.

The groundwater flow direction is expected to change seasonally due to both alterations in pumping and changes in the water table. Recent rains have brought the water table up approximately seven feet within the past month. During January and February, Board staff

sampled wells to determine whether conditions may have changed. Results of this sampling from 14 wells on properties adjacent to contaminated wells revealed no new cases of well contamination. There are currently a total of 26 wells contaminated with PCE in the area.



(Stephen Bargsten and Janice Goebel shown using the Geoprobe Drilling Rig)

Staff began investigative work utilizing the capabilities of this drilling rig. Board staff member Janice Goebel guided the initial work that focused on determining the depth limitation for the drilling rig in this area and gathering information on the characteristics of the geology. Geological core samples were collected from the shallow geological formations and logged by staff geologist Beth Lamb.

Staff began work to gather data of any PCE contamination of indoor air in homes and businesses. Staff also began an extensive soil-gas survey designed to identify contamination sources and guide further drilling work in the neighborhood. Staff has continued to meet regularly with interested residents to discuss and coordinate ongoing work as well as to answer questions and concerns that arise.

The Regional Water Board held a public meeting for residents and other interested parties on February 28, 2001. The public received an update from Regional Water Board staff, the Sonoma County Department of Health Services, the City of Santa Rosa, and representatives of Sonoma County.

Update on Morgan Doors, Weed

[Staff contact: Dean Prat]

The Morgan Doors site is located in the City of Weed. The site is contaminated with the wood treatment chemicals pentachlorophenol (PCP) and tetrachlorophenol (TCP), which were used at the site. Roseburg Lumber Company (Roseburg) currently owns the property, and the former property owner, International Paper, Inc. (IP), is conducting cleanup of the site.

In June 2000, PCP and TCP contamination was detected in surface water samples collected from a tributary to Boles Creek. Since June 2000, additional site assessments have been conducted, and interim remedial actions have been taken to control contaminant migration into Boles Creek.

On January 11, 2001, the Executive Officer issued Cleanup and Abatement Order No. R1-2001-03 to Roseburg and IP to provide guidance in the cleanup activities at the site. A final remedial action plan for the site is due by June 1, 2002.

MtBE Contamination of Domestic Drinking Water in the Hare Creek Neighborhood, Fort Bragg

[Staff contact: Beth Lamb]

Groundwater in the Hare Creek neighborhood located south of the City of Fort Bragg between Hare Creek and Digger Creek has been contaminated with methyl tertiary-butyl ether (MtBE). Seven households with contaminated wells have wellhead treatment systems installed and three additional households will be added. The highest concentrations of MtBE occurred directly downgradient from the Fort Bragg Oil Station.

The Regional Water Board has issued Cleanup and Abatement Order No. 98-118 to the owners of Fort Bragg Oil and European Stables. These two responsible parties have been cooperating with the Regional Water Board and have been investigating the groundwater plume and are taking responsibility to provide wellhead treatment to impacted drinking water wells. Both parties have applied for funds and are being reimbursed by the State of California's Underground Storage Tank Cleanup Fund.

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT DIVISION

Meet the Watershed Assessment and Monitoring Unit

[Staff contact: Robert Klamt]

The Watershed Management Division contains three units: Watershed Assessment and Monitoring, Planning, and Total Maximum Daily Load. This article introduces the Watershed Assessment and Monitoring Division.



(From left, Peter Otis, Katharine Spivak, Robert Klamt, Jill Sunahara, Damien O'Bid, Janet Blake, and Elmer Dudik)

The Watershed Assessment and Monitoring Unit is responsible for water quality monitoring and assessment programs as well as the Watershed Management Initiative (WMI), North Coast Watershed Assessment Program (NCWAP), and the Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP) for the North Coast Region. Robert Klamt supervises this unit.

Ms. Blake is responsible for formulation and revisions to the WMI chapters. She also provides outreach assistance to watershed groups and coordinates various grant programs.

Peter Otis is responsible for the SWAMP program. He has extensive experience in monitoring and assessment programs at the Regional Water Board.

Jill Sunahara, Katharine Spivak, and Damien O'Bid primarily work on the NCWAP program. These staff members are responsible for compiling and analyzing existing water quality data and coordinating this effort with other resources agencies. This new program was created this year with funds from the California Resources Agency.

Previous to joining this unit, Elmer Dudik worked in the Timber Harvest Division. He now works on the SWAMP and the NCWAP programs.

Staff is recruiting for an additional position in this unit to work on the NCWAP program.

United States Forest Service Lands

[Staff contact: Rebecca Van Asdlan]

On February 22, 2001, Regional Water Board staff met with United States Forest Service (USFS) staff and discussed how total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) will be implemented on USFS lands and discussed the USFS's Northern Province TMDL Implementation Strategy for Forest Service Lands (Strategy) dated January 2000. The Strategy describes existing USFS programs and how they might correspond to TMDL implementation. Staff also discussed how to prioritize watersheds for restoration, possible TMDL implementation requirements, examples of TMDL implementation requirements from the Garcia River TMDL, proposed target conditions, and the Federal Clean Water Act section 303(d) list update.

Klamath River Total Maximum Daily Load; Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

On February 2, 2001, the Executive Officer of the Regional Water Board issued a letter of support to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ). The ODEQ is applying for grant funds from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to develop a water quality model of the Lost River Basin.

The Lost River starts in California, loops through Oregon, and returns to California. The Lost River is on the Clean Water Act 303(d) lists for both states. The Oregon and California water quality agencies have been coordinating the development of total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) for the Lost River Basin.

Support by the U.S. EPA of a water quality model for the Lost River Basin will provide a strong foundation for the coordinated TMDL development efforts of Oregon and California.

TIMBER HARVEST DIVISION

Water Quality Monitoring Program, Jenner

[Staff contact: Christine Wright-Shacklett]

On February 27, 2001, the Executive Officer of the Regional Water Board issued a water quality-monitoring program to two timberland owners in response to proposed timber harvesting in Jenner Gulch. After several inspections during the past year, Regional Water Board staff found historical logging operations continuing to erode sediment into Jenner Gulch. The two proposed timber harvest plans in the watershed could add to this sediment load and cause excessive turbidity of downstream waters.

The monitoring program, designed by Regional Water Board staff, will protect the domestic water supply of the community of Jenner by identifying sources of sediment. Jenner Gulch is a tributary of the Russian River and may support coho salmon and steelhead trout, both of which are listed as threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act.

Pacific Lumber Company Timber Harvest Plan

[Staff contact: Frank Reichmuth]

There has been no significant events pertaining to Pacific Lumber Company since the last report. Information on the Regional Water Board's proceedings regarding Pacific Lumber Company's and Scotia Pacific Company, LLC's Timber Harvest and Related Activities is available on our web site at:

<http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb1/palco.html>

WATERSHED PROTECTION DIVISION

[Staff contact: Robert Tancreto]

The Watershed Protection Division is currently working on revising fourteen Waste Discharge Requirements and NPDES Permits for the March, April, May, and June Regional Water Board meetings. Many of these permits are highly complex and include provisions that implement the California Toxics Rule. Some may be controversial.

Division staff is also working on a number of enforcement actions ranging from rescission of Cease and Desist Orders that have been complied with to several large storm water erosion problems.

The Regional Water Board has been notified of several citizen lawsuits under the Federal Clean Water Act. These are being prioritized and, as time allows, staff will address each action in relation to threat to water quality.

Staff have attended storm water workshops with the Santa Rosa City Council and the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors. The workshops focused on the history of the Santa Rosa area storm water permit issued by the Regional Water Board and what changes may be expected when the permit is reissued next year.

Healdsburg Sediment Discharge Complaint

[Staff contact: Andrew Baker]

On February 5, 2000, Regional Water Board staff, California Department of Fish and Game, and National Marine Fisheries Service conducted an initial site inspection in response to a citizen's complaint for sediment discharges associated with rural road construction near Healdsburg.



(5291 West Dry Creek Road, Healdsburg, Photo 1)

During the inspection, staff discovered approximately 2.25 miles of road and 10 acres of recent land clearing. The roads are eroding into Wine Creek and tributary streams. Roads that were recently constructed or reconstructed apparently were not built to proper standards or according to best management practices.



(5291 West Dry Creek Road, Healdsburg, Photo 2)

On February 13, 2001, the Executive Officer signed a California Water Code section 13267(b) order that requires the submittal of the following technical reports:

- Short-term (emergency) erosion control plan (ECP), by February 27, 2001

- Report on the history of recent land management activities by March 15, 2001
- Long-term ECP by March 30, 2001
- Completion report for the short-term ECP by April 1, 2001
- Completion report for the long-term ECP by August 30, 2001.

CLEANUP AND ABATEMENT ORDERS

There were no Cleanup and Abatement Orders issued during the month of February.

CALIFORNIA WATER CODE SECTION 13267 LETTER ORDERS

California Water Code Section 13267 letters were issued for the following sites: Janes Road and Eleventh Avenue, Arcata; 360 Tesconi Circle, Santa Rosa; 5291 West Dry Creek Road, Healdsburg; Cheek Skyline Logging, Douglas City; and Kidd Creek-Austin Creek Watershed, Russian River Basin.

ADMINISTRATIVE CIVIL LIABILITY COMPLAINTS/ORDERS

There were no Administrative Civil Liability Complaints issued during the month of February.

SPIILLS, COMPLAINTS, AND INSPECTIONS

There were seven spills reported on the Sanitary Sewer Overflow and Spill Data Management System since the last report.

CLEAN WATER ACT SECTION 401 CERTIFICATIONS

There were three Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certifications and two 401 Denials Without Prejudice issued during the month of February.

Information regarding all proposed certifications is available at our Internet web site at:

<http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb1/notice404.html>

UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK CLEANUP FUND PROGRAM

During the month of February, there were three Letters of Commitment issued in Region 1. From November 28, 2000, through February 26, 2001, there has been a total of \$469,876 in funds issued to tank owners in Region 1 from the Underground Storage Tank Cleanup Fund.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES/ WORKSHOPS

On February 5, 2001, Regional Water Board staff attended the Local Watershed Advisory Group (LWAG) meeting. Staff covered the process that the Regional Water Board follows in developing a TMDL and preparing this type of document, which eventually must meet Federal Environmental Protection Agency approval. The Garcia River effort was a successful process in creating a TMDL document, and may serve as a guide for upcoming TMDL assessments of watersheds throughout the region.

On February 14, 2001, Regional Water Board staff spoke to the Southern Sonoma Resource Conservation District about "Water Quality Control Board's History, Authority, and Sequential Enforcement" and "Winery Pomace Impacts on Water Quality and Proper Areas of Disposal."

On February 23, 2001, Board staff spoke to Community Alliance with Family Farmers about necessary permits for instream work and riparian restoration.

On February 23, 2001, Regional Water Board staff presented a Total Maximum Daily Load Workshop in Eureka to two board members and approximately 100 interested parties.

On February 28, 2001, a public meeting was held concerning the West College Avenue PCE Contamination Site. This meeting is discussed elsewhere in this report.

PUBLIC FILE REVIEW

From February 1, through March 1, two written requests were made for review of the Regional Water Board's records. These files were made available pursuant to the California Public Records Act. In addition, a total of 52 people came into the office and requested file review.

Staff also received a subpoena as did all regional water boards for records related to litigation involving MtBE releases.

PROMOTIONS/STAFF HIRING

New hires during the month of February include Matt St. John, and Mona Dougherty, both Water Resource Control Engineers.

The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption. For a list of simple ways you can reduce demand and cut your energy costs, see our web-site at <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov>.